

BÉLA ADAMIK (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest) *In Search of the Regional Diversification of Latin: Changes of the Declension System According to the Inscriptions.* *

Abstract

In order to discover chronological and/or geographical differences in the Latin of the Roman Empire, this paper analyses the distributional structures of the nominal morphosyntactic ‘errors’ which have been to date recorded from Latin inscriptions and concern the changes of the declension system. Present investigation, which is based on the very methodology of József Herman, will demonstrate that Roman provinces (Moesia Inferior, Moesia Superior, Dalmatia, Venetia–Histria and Gallia Narbonnensis selected for survey) can show conclusive differences in the distribution morphosyntactic phenomena both chronologically and geographically, and that this way they can be classified dialectologically. According to the inscriptional material of later periods, Gallia Narbonnensis and Venetia–Histria can be classified as belonging to an area where the linguistic system has only two cases the same way as in Old French and Old Occitan, while Dalmatia displays a preform of the two case system of the Balkan-type. Regarding Moesia Inferior and Superior, it can be asserted that a three-case system emerged in both areas, but the lack of any inscriptional evidence from the later periods makes it impossible to determine the direction in which the three case-system would have developed: towards the Gallic type represented by Gallia Narbonnensis and Venetia–Histria, or the Balkan-type represented by Dalmatia.

0. Introduction

According to József Herman, morphosyntactic phenomena in inscriptional texts are less suitable for statistical treatment in Latin dialectology than phonological ones (Herman 2000a: 126). However, here the sharp distinction between phonology and morphosyntax, and the implicit resignation from the morphosyntactic investigation of inscriptions is due to practical rather than theoretical considerations. The great majority of the data, i.e. the ‘errors’ that can be recorded from inscriptions are of phonological nature. This way, for Herman, only phonological data seem to be of sufficient frequency, therefore phonology is the primary subject for the statistical treatment of inscriptional texts.

This low proportion of morphosyntactic ‘errors’ found on inscriptions is also obvious in the data collected to date in the “Computerized Historical Linguistic Database of Latin Inscriptions of the Imperial Age”. If we exclude the ‘errors’ of technical origin¹ and consider

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¹ Labelled as *Errores non grammaticae* in the Database (see: <http://lldb.elte.hu/>); for a general description of the Database see Adamik (2009).

the general distribution of phonological and morphosyntactic data², we get the following distribution:³

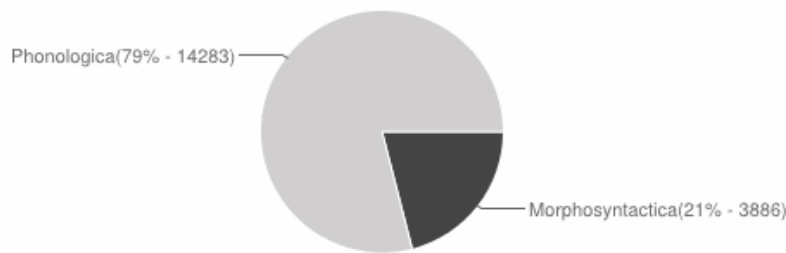


Chart 1: General distribution of phonological and morphosyntactic data

It is clear from this chart that the great majority of the ‘errors’ recorded in our Database from the first through eighth century is indeed of phonological nature (14,283 = 79%), while morphosyntactic ‘errors’ are in obvious minority (3,886 = 21%). This 21% rate is considerably higher than that found by Herman’s investigation, where it was only 12%.⁴ Although this difference may not seem to be too significant (21% vs. 12%), it nevertheless encourages and entitles us to survey this relative minority of morphosyntactic data in order to decide whether or not they are of sufficient frequency and thus suitable for statistical analysis in Latin dialectology.

In order to answer these questions we first have to analyse in more detail the linguistic distribution of the data set of morphosyntactic ‘errors’ irrespective of their chronological and territorial distribution.

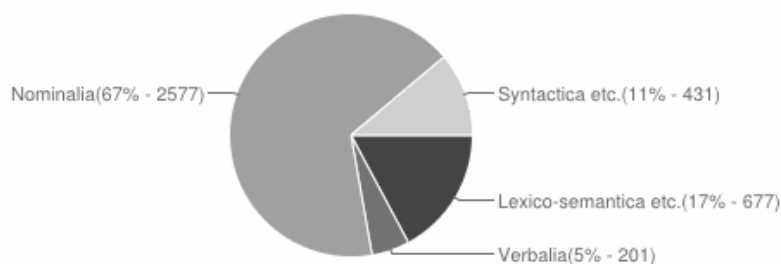


Chart 2: General distribution of morphosyntactic data

² In the charts 1-3 we consider only those data forms in our Database that do not have an alternative code (i.e. we exclude the data of alternative interpretation).

³ All the charts displayed in the study are prepared with the charting module of the Database and represent the status on 31.12.2012.

⁴ See the charts of Herman 2000a: 129-133 (cf. also Adamik 2012: 136-137); in Herman’s investigation there are 869 occurrences (= 88%) of phonological phenomena (AE~E included), and 123 occurrences (= 12%) of morphological phenomena.

If we consider the internal distribution of morphosyntactic data (in all 3,886 cases, displayed in Chart 2), it becomes obvious at first sight that at least the nominal morphosyntax (labelled as *Nominalia* in the chart) can serve as an object for statistical treatment due to its high proportion (67%, 2,577 items). Thus henceforth we merely deal with the nominal morphosyntactic data, that have the following, interesting distribution:

Megjegyzés: és akkor csak azzal foglalkozunk?

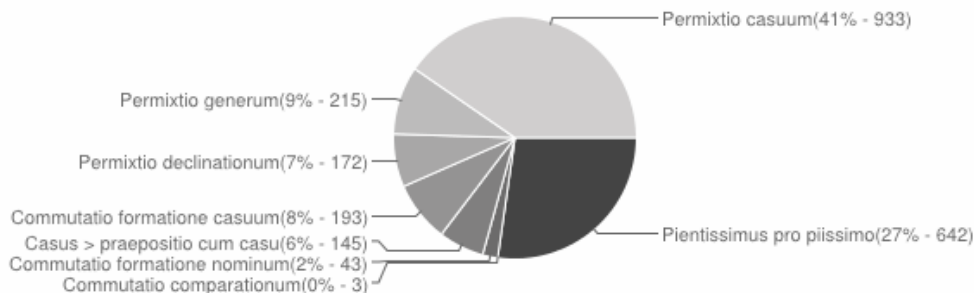


Chart 3: Distribution of nominal morphosyntactic data

Chart 3 shows that the majority of the nominal morphosyntactic data concerns the changes of the declension system (71% = 1,658 items), including the confusions of the cases (*Permixon casuum*: 41% = 933 items), genders (*Permixon generum*: 9% = 215 items) and declensions (*Permixon declinationum*: 7% = 172 items); innovations regarding the case endings (*Commutatio formatione casuum*: 8% = 193 items); and the use of prepositional phrases instead of inflections without prepositions (*Casus > praepositio cum casu*: 6% = 145 items; including the inverse counterparts as well), which is a symptom of the dissolution of the case system. If we disregard the relatively few incidences of pure morphological changes that concern the formation of nouns (*Commutatio formatione nominum*: 2% = 42 items), in some isolated cases the transformation of the grades of comparison in adjectives (*Commutatio comparationum*: 0% = 3 items) and especially the many instances of the practically lexicalized irregular superlative of the adjective *pius*, i.e. *pientissimus* instead of *piissimus* (*Pientissimus pro piissimo*: 27% = 642 items),⁵ it becomes clear that the investigation of the changes concerning the case system (41% = 933) may be the most promising research field.

Megjegyzés: az "as for" nem jelenti azt, hogy "regarding", amire viszont rendszeresen használod.

Consequently henceforth we only deal with the confusions of the cases (41% = 933 items) and the non-classical preposition usage (6% = 145 items), which together adds up to a promising proportion of 47% (= 1,078 items) of the nominal morphosyntactic data. We will also consider the instances of the first-declension nominative plural ending *-as* (18 items). The group of data forms thus yielded (1,078 in total) demonstrates the transformation of the case system, especially the confusions of the cases (933 items). They may hopefully create a solid basis for the further investigation of the change of the case-system and its territorial and chronological distribution.

⁵ There are also several occurrences of *piissimus* (231 items recorded in the Database) for the superlative of *pius*; however, as this form is considered standard Latin since Seneca's time, it is left out of consideration here too.

Throughout our investigation to the transformation of the declension system, we will consider all types of confusions of the cases recorded in our material, with particular emphasis on the substantial confusions of the accusative and the ablative, of the genitive and the dative, and of the nominative and the accusative. The blending of these cases led to the emergence of the Vulgar Latin declension system, where only two or three cases (depending on the region) were in use, as opposed to the classical declension system of five cases (Cf. Herman 2000b: 49ff). Apart from these confusions, we will also consider the instances of the first-declension nominative plural ending *-as*, which is the result of formal morphological confusion, rather than of a more general confusion of the nominative and accusative (Cf. Herman 2000b: 55). In addition, we will consider the instances of using prepositional phrases instead of the classical usage of inflections without prepositions, because the slowly dissolving case system was gradually replaced by prepositional phrases (excluding Rumanian to some extent); see Herman 2000b: 61.

Throughout our investigation, we will only consider those territorial units, i.e. Roman provinces, from where the inscriptional data is already uploaded to the Database, and where the amount of morphological data is sufficient for a meaningful statistical analysis. We will treat the respective Roman provinces one after the other, in two chronologically based sections: 1. early Empire, i.e., the 1–3rd centuries A.D.; 2. later Empire i.e. the era starting with the 4th century and lasting up to the 5th or 6th or 7th, and sometimes even 8th century A.D., depending on the history and epigraphic culture of each province.

Megjegyzés: ezt a mondatot nem értem

For our investigation we have selected five Roman provinces from the Latin part of the Empire: Moesia Inferior, Moesia Superior, Dalmatia, Venetia–Histria and Gallia Narbonnensis. Now let us examine the selected Roman provinces starting from the East and running to the West, looking first at the early, then the later Empire, to see whether they show conclusive differences in the distribution of the linguistic phenomena under consideration.

1.1. Early Moesia Inferior

The first province to be analysed is Moesia Inferior.⁶ The data recorded from early Moesia Inferior are sufficient (149 items = 100%) for drawing linguistic conclusions. The distribution of the data can be charted as follows:⁷

Megjegyzés: megjegyzésben múltidőt írtam - jól értem, hogy ezt csináltad?

⁶ The data pertaining to this province have been recorded mainly by Ágnes Jekl (and also by Sára Zalán) from the corpora of IScM, ILBulg, Conrad, IIFDR and IBulgarien (for resolving abbreviations of inscriptional corpora used in this survey see EDCS, <http://www.manfredclauss.de/abkuerz.html>).

⁷ In order to obtain a more substantial data set, besides the dataforms having one morphosyntactic main code, we had to take into consideration the data forms which have twofold encoding in our Database, i.e. a nominal morphosyntactical code and e.g. a phonological one parallelly, in whichever order. This procedure was inevitable because such forms as *comiti* for *comitis*, *comite* for *comitem* and *vita* for *vitam* etc. can be interpreted not only as examples of confusion of the cases but also as examples of phonological change, and these confusions are inseparable from each other. At the same time, we also considered data forms where the alternative code is another nominal morphosyntactic code, but here only the main code was taken into account.

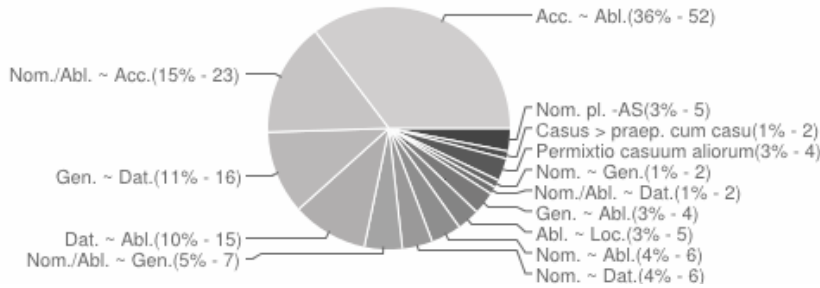


Chart 4: Early Moesia Inferior c. 1–3rd A.D.

From the distributional scheme of this chart,⁸ we can conclude that in early Moesia Inferior the confusion of the accusative and ablative cases was the most frequent phenomenon (36% = 52 items),⁹ followed by the confusion of the nominative–ablative and the accusative of the first declension (15% = 23 items),¹⁰ and by the confusion of the genitive and the dative (11% = 16 items).¹¹ The confusion of the dative and the ablative (10% = 15 items) also has to be mentioned here as a further characteristic feature of the area.¹² The other confusions with fewer than 10 instances are left out of account as more or less isolated and irrelevant phenomena.¹³

⁸ In the notes related to the data displayed at charts 4–13 we use the next system: after the total number of the confusion concerned we give the figures of each subtypes of the related confusion as they are coded in the Database (e.g. 2 Acc. ~ Abl = 1 acc. pro abl. + 1 abl. pro acc. etc.), with an illustrative example of the subtype at the first occurrence in this study.

⁹ 52 Acc. ~ Abl = 32 acc. pro abl. (alternatively coded as -0 > -m, e.g. LLDB-934: PRO SALVTEM = *pro salute*, IScM 1, 344, 4, AD 202) + 7 nom./acc. pro abl. (e.g. LLDB-19570: PR[O] NEPOTES = *pro nepotibus*, ILBulg 426, 2, AD 17–200) + 7 dat./abl. pro acc. (e.g. LLDB-8547: PER[O] VALERIO = *per Valerium*, IScM 5, 66, 5–7, AD 178) + 6 abl. pro acc. (alternatively coded as -m > -0, e.g. LLDB-11200: OP PI[ET]ATE = *ob pietatem*, IScM 5, 189, 8–9, AD 101–150).

¹⁰ 23 Nom./Abl. ~ Acc = 23 nom./abl. pro acc. (alternatively coded as -m > -0, e.g. LLDB-2010: ARA[O] POSVIT = *aram posuit*, IScM 1, 373, 13, AD 157).

¹¹ 16 Gen. ~ Dat. = 10 dat./abl. pro gen. (e.g. LLDB-10607: PRO [S]AL[VT]E IMP[O] ANTONINO = *pro salute imperatoris Antonini*, IScM 5, 13, 4, AD 138–161) + 6 dat. pro gen. (alternatively coded as -s > -0, e.g. LLDB-1151: DIS MANIBVS | C IVLI[O] CEL[E]RI VETER = *Dis Manibus Gai Iulii Celeris veterani*, ILBulg 56, 1–4, AD 101–150).

¹² 15 Dat. ~ Abl. = 4 abl. -e > I (alternatively coded as e > I, e.g. LLDB-6867: PRO SALVTI = *pro salute*, IScM 5, 23, 3, AD 161–169) + 10 dat. -ī > E (alternatively coded as i > E, e.g. LLDB-4009: BENE[O] MERENTE[O] POSVIT = *bene merenti posuit*, IScM 2, 346, 7–8, AD 201–300) + 1 abl. -ī > E (alternatively coded as i > E, e.g. LLDB-4569: PRAESIDE[O] [CO]NSVLARE = *praeside consulari*, IScM 3, 97, 4–5, AD 169–175).

¹³ 7 Nom./Abl. ~ Gen. = 7 nom./abl. pro gen. (e.g. LLDB-7272: VET[RANVS] ALA = *veteranus alae*, IScM 5, 23, 8, AD 161–169; 6 Nom. ~ Dat. = 2 dat. pro nom. (LLDB-4882: CAESAR[O] [RE]STITVTORI = *Caesar restitutor*, IScM 3, 96, 12, AD 274) + 4 nom. pro dat. (LLDB-11113: ASCLEPIO ET YGIA[O] = *Asclepio et Hygiae*, IScM 5, 239, 1, AD 151–200); 6 Nom. ~ Abl. = 5 nom. pro abl. (e.g. LLDB-670: CVRA AGEN[TIBVS] MAG CLA GAI[VS] = *curam agentibus magistris Claudio Gaio*, IScM 1, 326, 8–9, AD 149) + 1 abl. pro nom. (alternatively coded as -s > -0, c.f. LLDB-19765: MARCEALE[O] POSVIT = *Martialis posuit*, ILBulg 199, 1, AD 201–300); 5 Abl. ~ Loc. = 5 loc. pro abl. (e.g. LLDB-11197: DOMO OESCI = *domo Oesco*, IScM 5, 188, 4, AD 106–162); 4 Gen. ~ Abl. = 1 abl. pro gen. (c.f. LLDB-11143: VERI AVRELII CAESARE = *Veri Aurelii Caesaris*, IScM 5, 13, 5, AD 138–161) + 3 gen. pro abl. (e.g. LLDB-11286: CAIO [AL]EXANDRI = *Caio Alexandro*, IScM 5, 233, 9–10, AD 178); 2 Nom./Abl. ~ Dat. = 2 nom./abl. pro dat. (e.g. LLDB-1217: DO[MINA] PVER[O] D D = *dominae puer donum dedit*, ILBulg 362, 1–2, AD 131–AD 300); 2 Nom. ~ Gen. = 2 nom. pro gen. (e.g. LLDB-1277: PRO SALVTE IMP M ANT GORDIANVS = *pro salute imperatoris M. Antonii*

1.2. Later Moesia Inferior

In later Moesia Inferior, the recorded data amounts only to the third of those recorded for the early Moesia Inferior (149 items), but it still yields a sufficient number of data forms (49 items = 100%) for drawing cautious but relevant linguistic conclusions. The distribution of the data can be charted as follows:

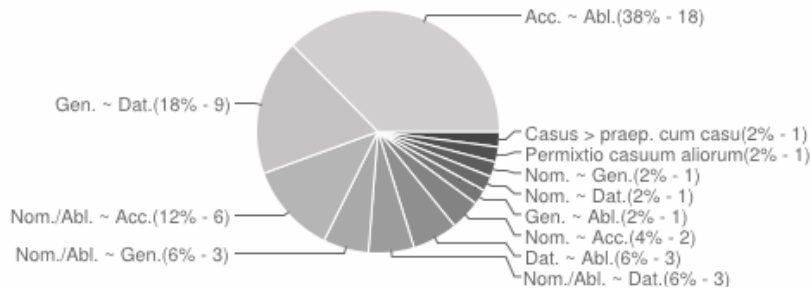


Chart 5: Later Moesia Inferior c. 4–6th A.D.

From the distributional scheme of this chart we can conclude that in later Moesia Inferior the confusion of the cases accusative and ablative was most prevalent (38% = 18 items).¹⁴ The second most frequent ‘error’ was the confusion of the genitive and the dative (18% = 9 items), followed by the confusion of the nominative–ablative and the accusative of the first declension (12% = 6 items).¹⁵ For other types of confusion or change there are less than 5 examples recorded, therefore these should be regarded as isolated and irrelevant phenomena, which are thus left out of consideration.¹⁶

In short, Moesia Inferior shows a little difference between its early (= E) and later (= L) data profile. However, as there is an apparent shift between the distributional schemes of the early and later Moesia Inferior, the conclusion can be drawn that the early predominance of the confusion of the accusative and the ablative became more marked (E 36% > L 38%) later on, and the confusion of the nominative–ablative and the accusative of the first declension relatively frequent in early times perceptibly receded (E 15% > 12%) in the later

Gordiani, IScM 1, 347, 6-8, AD 238); 4 commutatio vel permixtio casuum aliorum (e.g. LLDB-19424: MEMORIAM| [C]AVSAM POSVIT = *memoriae causa posuit*, Conrad 525, 5 AD 251-300); 2 Casus > praep. cum casu = 2 casus sine praep. > praep. (e.g. LLDB-19697: EXS| VISV = visu, ILBulg 270, 4-5, AD 101-250); The nominative plural ending -as turns up five times, thus it can be regarded not as a completely isolated phenomenon: 5 nom. pl. -AS pro -ae (e.g. LLDB-19763: FIL[I]VS ATQV [FI]LIAS MEAS| () POSVERVNT = *filius atque filiae meae () posuerunt*, ILBulg 170, 7-8, AD 131-170).

¹⁴ 18 Acc. ~ Abl. = 3 abl. pro acc. + 2 nom./acc. pro abl. + 3 dat./abl. pro acc. + 10 acc. pro abl.

¹⁵ 9 Gen. ~ Dat. = 1 gen. pro dat. + 5 dat./abl. pro gen. + 3 dat. pro gen.; 6 Nom./Abl. ~ Acc. = 6 nom./abl. pro acc.

¹⁶ 3 Nom./Abl. ~ Gen. = 3 nom./abl. pro gen.; 3 Nom./Abl. ~ Dat. = 3 nom./abl. pro dat.; 3 Dat. ~ Abl. = 2 dat. -ī > E + 1 abl. -e > I; 2 Nom. ~ Acc. = 2 acc. pro nom. (e.g. LLDB-20702: PVSVVIT VN (I) CVNIVGEN SVA = *posuit hunc () coniunx sua*, IBulgarien 130, 5-6, AD 301- 400); 1 Gen. ~ Abl. = 1 abl. pro gen.; 1 Nom. ~ Dat. = 1 dat. pro nom.; 1 Nom. ~ Gen. = 1 nom. pro. gen.; 1 commutatio vel permixtio casuum aliorum; 1 Casus > praep. cum casu = 1 casus sine praep. > praep.

period, conceding its second rank to the confusion of the genitive and the dative (E 11% > L 18%).

2.1. Early Moesia Superior

The second province to be investigated is Moesia Superior,¹⁷ the Western neighbour of Moesia Inferior. The amount of relevant data recorded from early Moesia Superior is not as high as from early Moesia Inferior (149 items), but it still yields sufficient data (51 items = 100%) for drawing cautious but relevant linguistic conclusions. The distribution of the data can be charted as follows:

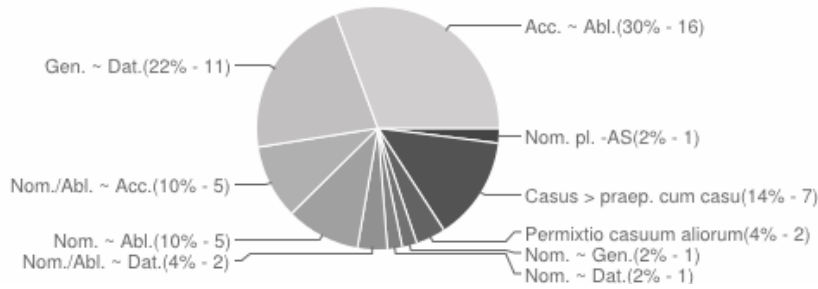


Chart 6: Early Moesia Superior c. 1–3rd A.D.

From the distributional scheme of this chart we can conclude that the confusion of the cases accusative and ablative prevailed here too (30% = 16 items). It was followed in frequency by the confusion of the genitive and the dative (22% = 11 items).¹⁸ For other types of confusion or change, including the single, isolated occurrence of the nominative plural ending *-as*, there are less than 10 examples recorded, therefore these should be regarded as isolated and irrelevant phenomena, which are thus left out of consideration.¹⁹

2.2. Later Moesia Superior

In later Moesia Superior, the number of recorded data forms is very low, yielding a data set (25 = 100%) barely sufficient for drawing very cautious, however, possibly relevant linguistic conclusions. The distribution of the data can be charted as follows:

¹⁷ The data pertaining to this province have been recorded mainly by Réka Visontai (and also by Sára Zalán) from the corpus of IMS, complemented by AE and ILJug.

¹⁸ 16 Acc. ~ Abl. = 3 abl. pro acc. + 3 nom./acc. pro abl. + 10 acc. pro abl.; 11 Gen. ~ Dat. = 5 gen. pro dat. + 1 dat./abl. pro gen. + 5 dat. pro gen.

¹⁹ 5 Nom./Abl. ~ Acc. = 5 nom./abl. pro acc.; 5 Nom. ~ Abl. = 5 nom. pro abl.; 2 Nom./Abl. ~ Dat. = 2 nom./abl. pro dat.; 1 Nom. ~ Dat. = 1 dat. pro nom.; 1. Nom. ~ Gen. = 1 nom. pro. gen.; 2 commutatio vel permixtio casuum aliorum; 7 Casus > praep. cum casu = 6 casus sine praep. > praep. + 1 praep. > casus sine praep. (cf. LLDB-14324: EXIERV[NT ANCONES FACIEN]DOS = *exierunt ad ancones faciendos*, AE 1973, 473, 2-4, AD 99-100); 1 nom. pl. -AS pro -ae.

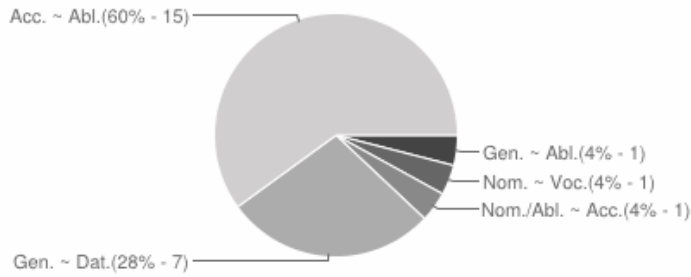


Chart 7: *Later Moesia Superior c. 4–6th A.D.*

The distributional scheme of this chart is quite similar to that of later Moesia Inferior, but it is simpler and more settled. Similarly, in later Moesia Superior the confusion of the cases accusative and ablative prevailed (60% = 15 items), while the confusion of the genitive and the dative (28% = 7 items) was also worth mentioning.²⁰ For other types of confusion or change there are less than 5 examples recorded, therefore these should be regarded as isolated and irrelevant phenomena, which are thus left out of consideration.²¹

In short, Moesia Superior also shows a difference between its early (= E) and later (= L) data profiles, which are otherwise very similar to those of Moesia Inferior. From the shift between the early and later distributional schemes of Moesia Superior the conclusion can be drawn that the early prevalence of the confusion of the accusative and the ablative extended significantly over the centuries (E 30% > L 60%), and the confusion of the genitive and the dative, significant in early times, also extended observably in the later period (E 22 % > L 28 %).

3.1. Early Dalmatia

The third province to be presented is Dalmatia.²² The number of data forms recorded from early Dalmatia is very low, yielding a data set (27 items = 100%) barely sufficient for drawing very cautious, however, possibly relevant linguistic conclusions. The distribution of the data can be charted as follows:²³

²⁰ 15 Acc. ~ Abl. = 3 acc. pro abl. + 7 dat./abl. pro acc. + 4 abl. pro acc. + 1 nom./acc. pro abl.; 7 Gen. ~ Dat. = 2 dat./abl. pro gen. + 2 dat. pro gen. + 3 gen. pro dat.

²¹ 1 Nom./Abl. ~ Acc. = 1 nom./abl. pro acc.; 1 Nom. ~ Voc. = 1 nom. pro voc. (e.g. LLDB-4766: FILI MEVS = *fili mi*, IMS 4, 50, 1 AD 301-600); 1 Gen. ~ Abl. = 1 abl. pro gen.

²² The data pertaining to this province have been recorded by myself from the corpus of ILJug and the recently published corpus of Christian inscriptions in Salona (abbreviated as Salona in our Database and as Salona-04 in EDCS, see <http://www.manfredclauss.de/abkuerz.html>)

²³ This entire chart with its distributional scheme of early Dalmatian changes is yet indefinite and hypothetical: a more precise presentation will be possible after recording the remaining data of CIL.

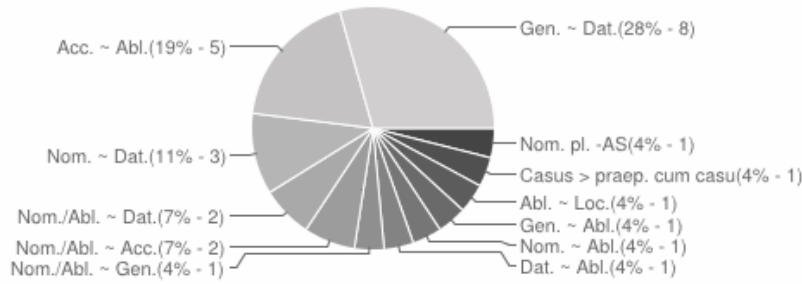


Chart 8: Early Dalmatia c. 1-3rd A.D.

From this chart we may conclude that the confusion of the genitive and dative cases could have been the most frequent phenomenon (28% = 8 items), followed by the confusion of the accusative and the ablative (19% = 5 items).²⁴ For other types of confusion, including the isolated, single occurrence of the nominative plural ending *-as*, there are less than 5 examples recorded –, therefore these are considered isolated and irrelevant phenomena.²⁵

3.2. Later Dalmatia

In contrast to early Dalmatia, we have sufficient data (85 items = 100 %) for later Dalmatia, which allows for drawing relevant linguistic conclusions. The distribution of the data can be charted as follows:

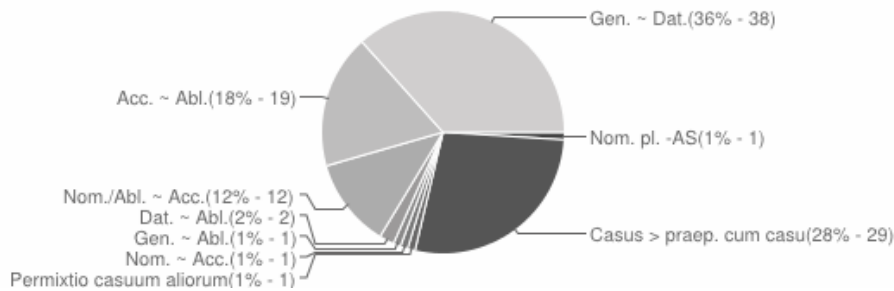


Chart 9: Later Dalmatia, c. 4-7th A.D.

If we leave the quite high proportion of non-classical prepositional usage out of consideration (28% = 29 items)²⁶, we can conclude the following from the rest. The confusion of the

²⁴ 8 Gen. ~ Dat. = 1 gen. pro dat. + 7 dat. pro gen.; 5 Acc. ~ Abl. = 2 acc. pro abl. + 3 abl. pro acc.

²⁵ 3 Nom. ~ Dat. = 3 nom. pro dat.; 2 Nom./Abl. ~ Dat. = 2 nom./abl. pro dat.; 2 Nom./Abl. ~ Acc. = 2 nom./abl. pro acc.; 1 Nom./Abl. ~ Gen. = 1 nom./abl. pro gen.; 1 Dat. ~ Abl. = 1 abl. -e > I; 1 Nom. ~ Abl. = 1 nom. pro abl.; 1 Gen. ~ Abl. = 1 gen. pro abl.; 1 Abl. ~ Loc. = abl. pro loc.; 1 Casus > praep. cum casu = 1 casus sine praep. > praep. 1 Nom. pl. -AS pro -ae.

²⁶ 29 Casus > praep. cum casu = 29 casus sine praep. > praep. In most cases they are of the type: *sub die* instead of *die* (e.g. LLDB-14233: SVB DIE = *die*, ILJug 3, 2548, 1, AD 501-600). The prepositional phrases recorded in our database are always used for reinforcing the semantic function of the case itself and almost never instead of another case like *ad* and the accusative instead of dative or *de* and ablative instead of genitive.

genitive and dative cases clearly prevailed (36% = 38 items), while the confusion of the accusative and the ablative (18% = 19 items) is the second most common ‘error’, and the confusion of the nominative–ablative and the accusative of the first declension (12% = 12 items) is the third.²⁷ Other types of confusion, including the single instance of the nominative plural ending *-as*, are obviously so scarce that they can be left out of the profile as isolated phenomena.²⁸

In short, Dalmatia shows a difference between its early (= E) and later (= L) profile of data. From the shift between the early and later distributional schemes of the province the conclusion can be drawn that the early predominance of the confusion of the genitive and the dative became more marked later on (E 28% > L 36%), while the confusion of the accusative and the ablative kept its second rank (E 19% > 18%) and the extending (E 7% > 12%) confusion of the nominative–ablative and the accusative of the first declension got the third place in the later period.

4.1. Early Venetia et Histria

The fourth analysed province is Venetia–Histria.²⁹ The number of data forms recorded from early Venetia–Histria is very low, yielding a data set (24 items = 100%) barely sufficient for drawing very cautious, however, possibly relevant linguistic conclusions. The distribution of the data can be charted as follows:³⁰

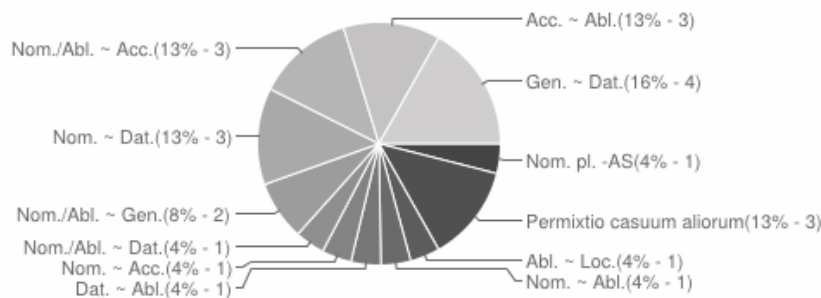


Chart 10: Early Venetia and Histria c. 1–3rd A.D.

From this chart we might however conclude that the confusion of the genitive and dative cases may have been the most frequent phenomenon (16% = 4 items), and the confusion of the accusative and ablative, together with the confusion of the nominative–ablative and the accusative of the first declension, and the nominative and the dative (all three of 13% = 3

²⁷ 38 Gen. ~ Dat. = 22 dat./abl. pro gen.; 16 dat. pro gen.; 19 Acc. ~ Abl. = 2 dat./abl. pro acc. + 1 nom./acc. pro abl. + 8 abl. pro acc. + 8 acc. pro abl.; 12 Nom./Abl. ~ Acc. = 12 nom./abl. pro acc.

²⁸ 2 Dat. ~ Abl. = 2 abl. -e > I; 1 Gen. ~ Abl. = 1 abl. pro gen.; 1 Nom. ~ Acc. = 1 nom. pro acc.; 1 commutatio vel permixtio casuum aliorum; 1 Nom. pl. -AS pro -ae.

²⁹ The data pertaining to this province have been recorded by Ákos Zimonyi from the corpora InscrAgu, InscrIt, CIL, Pais, AE, and IEAquil.

³⁰ This entire chart with its distributional scheme resembles to that of early Dalmatia and to the next of early Gallia Narbonnensis considerably and every conclusion drawn from it is quite hypothetical and provisional yet.

items) were tied for the second place.³¹ For other types of confusion, including the single instance of the nominative plural ending *-as*, there are less than 4 examples recorded, which are thus considered isolated and irrelevant phenomena.³²

4.2. Later Venetia et Histria

In contrast to the early times of Venetia–Histria, we have a sufficient amount of data (102 items = 100%) for the later period of this province that allows for drawing relevant linguistic conclusions. The distribution of the data can be charted as follows:

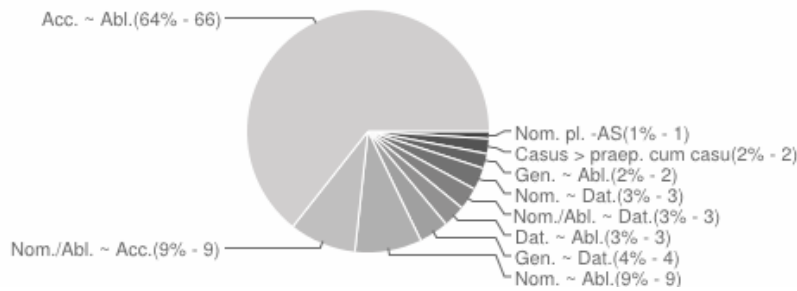


Chart 11: Later Venetia and Histria c. 4–8th A.D.

From the distributional scheme of this chart, which is simpler and more settled than that of early Venetia–Histria, we can see that the confusion of the accusative and ablative cases definitely prevailed (64% = 66 items), followed by the confusion of the nominative–ablative and the accusative of the first declension and by the confusion of the nominative and ablative with their proportion lagging behind (9% = 9 items).³³ For other types of confusion or change there are less than 9 examples recorded, which can be regarded here as isolated and irrelevant phenomena, and are thus left out of consideration.³⁴

In short, Venetia–Histria shows a significant difference between its early (= E) and later (= L) data profile. From the shift between the early and later distributional schemes of the province we can conclude that the early predominance of the confusion of the accusative and the ablative extended extremely in later times (E 13% > L 64%), and the confusion of the genitive and the dative, predominating in early Venetia–Histria, largely receded later (E 16% > L 4%).

³¹ 4 Gen. ~ Dat. = 2 dat. pro gen. + 1 dat./abl. pro gen. + 1 gen. pro dat.; 3 Acc. ~ Abl. = 3 nom./acc. pro abl.; 3 Nom./Abl. ~ Acc. = 3 nom./abl. pro acc.; 3 Nom. ~ Dat. = 2 nom. pro dat. + 1 dat. pro nom.

³² 2 Nom./Abl. ~ Gen. = 2 nom./abl. pro gen.; 1 Nom./Abl. ~ Dat. = 1 nom./abl. pro dat.; 1 Nom. ~ Acc. = 1 acc. pro nom.; 1 Dat. ~ Abl. = 1 abl. -ī > E; 1 Nom. ~ Abl. = 1 nom. pro abl.; 1 Abl. ~ Loc. = 1 abl. pro loc.; 3 commutatio vel permixtio casuum aliorum; 1 nom. pl. -AS pro -ae.

³³ 66 Acc. ~ Abl. = 34 abl. pro acc. + 13 nom./acc. pro abl. + 1 dat./abl. pro acc. + 18 acc. pro abl.; 9 Nom./Abl. ~ Acc. = 9 nom./abl. pro acc.; 9 Nom. ~ Abl. = 7 abl. pro nom. + 1 dat./abl. pro nom. (e.g. LLDB-21166: OB[II]T IVLIANO = *obiit Iulianus*, InscrIt 10, 2, 157, 1, AD 590-900) + 1 nom. pro abl.

³⁴ 4 Gen. ~ Dat. = 3 dat./abl. pro gen. + 1 dat. pro gen.; 3 Dat. ~ Abl. = 1 abl. -e > I + 2 dat. -ī > E; 3 Nom./Abl. ~ dat. = 3 nom./abl. pro dat.; 3 Nom. ~ Dat. = 2 nom. pro dat. + 1 dat. pro nom.; 2 Gen. ~ Abl. = 2 gen. pro abl.; 2 Casus > praep. cum casu = 2 casus sine praep. > praep.; 1 nom. pl. -AS pro -ae.

5.1. Early Gallia Narbonnensis

The fifth and last province considered in this context is Gallia Narbonnensis.³⁵ The amount of data recorded from early Narbonnensis is quite low, yielding a data set (26 items = 100%) barely sufficient for drawing very cautious but possibly relevant linguistic conclusions. The distribution of the data can be charted as follows:³⁶

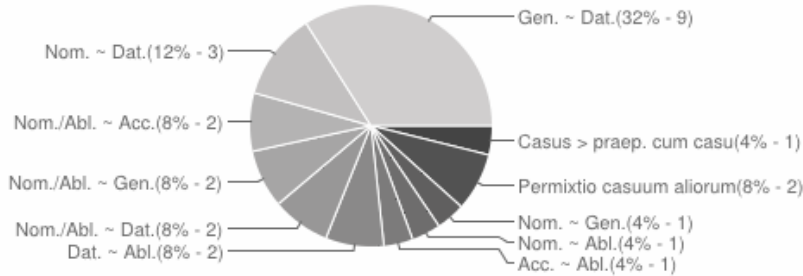


Chart 12: Early Gallia Narbonnensis c. 1–3rd A.D.

From this chart we may however conclude that the confusion of the genitive and dative cases could have been the most frequent (32% = 9 items).³⁷ All other types of confusion occur so scarcely that they can be regarded as irrelevant phenomena.³⁸

5.2. Later Gallia Narbonnensis

In contrast to early Narbonnensis, we have a sufficient amount of data (81 items = 100 %) for later Narbonnensis, which allows for drawing relevant linguistic conclusions. The distribution of the data can be charted as follows:

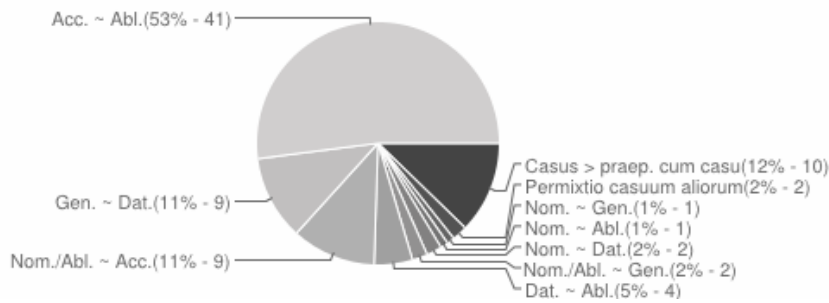


Chart 13: Later Gallia Narbonnensis c. 4–8th A.D.

³⁵ As for this province the data have been recorded by Zsuzsanna Ötvös from the next corpora: ILN, RICG, ICalvet, INimes, ILHSavoie and RISch.

³⁶ This entire chart with its distributional scheme resembles that of early Dalmatia and of Early Venetia and Histria considerably and every conclusion drawn from it is yet merely hypothetical.

³⁷ 9 Gen. ~ Dat. = 1 dat./abl. pro gen. + 2 gen. pro dat. + 6 dat. pro gen.

³⁸ 3 Nom. ~ Dat. = 3 nom. pro dat.; 2 Nom./Abl. ~ Acc. = 2 nom./abl. pro acc.; 2 Nom./Abl. ~ Gen. = 2 nom./abl. pro gen.; 2 Nom./Abl. ~ Dat. = 2 nom./abl. pro dat.; 2 Dat. ~ Abl. = 1 dat. -ī > E + 1 abl. -ī > E; 1 Acc. ~ Abl. = 1 abl. pro acc.; 1 Nom. ~ Abl. = 1 nom. pro abl.; 1 Nom. ~ Gen. = 1 nom. pro gen.; 2 commutatio vel permixtio casuum aliorum; 1 Casus > praep. cum casu = 1 casus sine praep. > praep.; For the nominative plural ending -as we do not have any examples at all.

From the distributional scheme of this chart, which is simpler and more settled than that of early Narbonnensis, we can conclude that the confusion of the cases accusative and ablative was the most prevalent feature (53% = 41 items).³⁹ Apart from this and the quite high proportion of non-classical prepositional usage (12% = 10 items),⁴⁰ only the confusion of the genitive and the dative and the confusion of the nominative–ablative and the accusative of the first declension is worth mentioning, both with their proportion lagging behind (11% = 9 items).⁴¹ For other types of confusion or change there are less than 9 examples, which therefore can be regarded as isolated and irrelevant phenomena, and are thus left out of consideration.⁴²

In short, Gallia Narbonnensis also shows a significant difference between its early (= E) and later (= L) data profile. From the radical shift between the early and the later distributional schemes of the province, we can conclude that the proportion of the confusion of the accusative and the ablative extended extremely (E 1% > L 50%), stealing the first place from the confusion of the genitive and the dative, which receded significantly (E 32 % > L 11 %), and was forced back to the second place.

6. Final Conclusions

The first and most obvious conclusion of present survey is that all provinces involved display differences in their early and later data profile. This demonstrates that the processes of linguistic change are traceable in the inscriptional material of each region throughout the course of time.

However, there is a more important question: to see whether our investigation could yield any new information on the territorial differences in the transformation process of the Latin declension system. The answer is a solid 'yes'. If we call to mind the main features of the transformation process of the nominal inflectional system and compare these features with our findings, we get the following picture.

According to the evidence of early and modern Romance languages, there must have been three different regions of the Vulgar Latin declension system:

³⁹ 41 Acc. ~ Abl. = 10 abl. pro acc. + 5 dat./abl. pro acc. + 1 nom./acc. pro abl. + 25 acc. pro abl.

⁴⁰ 10 Casus > praep. cum casu = 10 casus sine praep. > praep (in most cases of the type *sub die* instead of *die*).

⁴¹ 9 Gen. ~ Dat. = 1 dat. pro gen. + 8 dat./abl. pro gen.; 9. Nom./Abl. ~ Acc. = 9 nom./abl. pro acc.

⁴² 4 Dat. ~ Abl. = 2 abl. -e > I + 2 abl. -ī > E; 2 Nom./Abl. ~ Gen. = 2 nom./abl. pro gen.; 2 Nom. ~ Dat. = 2 nom. pro dat.; 1 Nom. ~ Abl. = 1 nom. pro abl.; 1 Nom. ~ Gen. = 1 nom. pro. gen.; 2 commutatio vel permixtio casuum aliorum; The nominative plural ending -as does not turn up at all.

Vulgar Latin Case-system	nominative	accusative-ablative	dative-genitive
1. Gaul (Old French, Old Occitan)			
2. Balkans (Rumanian)			
3. Africa (Hispania, Italia), modern Romance			

Table 1: Different regions of the Vulgar Latin declension system

1. According to the evidence of Old French and Old Occitan, a system with only two cases evolved in late Gaul, where a nominative was opposed to an oblique case descending from the accusative.⁴³ 2. According to the evidence of Rumanian, another system with only two cases emerged in the Balkans, where an established dative-genitive inflection was opposed to a nominative-accusative inflection, which emerged from the fusion of the nominative and the accusative-ablative.⁴⁴ 3. There must have been a third area in later times, i.e. Africa and probably parts of Italy and Hispania, where the nominative and the accusative merged earlier than in Gaul, and a system with only one inflection emerged, which means that in those regions the system of inflections effectively disappeared – as there is no such system in modern Romance languages except for Rumanian.⁴⁵

Now, the results of our investigation largely agree with the general picture sketched above.

⁴³ Herman 2000: 58: “This stage, containing only a nominative and an oblique inflection in the singular and the plural, still survives in the two-case declensions of Old French and Old Occitan texts (and probably in the contemporary but unwritten Western Rhaeto-Romance as well).”

⁴⁴ Herman 2000: 59: “It looks as if the developments were slightly different in the East. Late inscriptions from the Balkans contain far more possessive datives than elsewhere, which probably attests to the survival in these regions of a dative-genitive inflection opposed to all the other cases. This development could be what explains the presence in Modern Rumanian of a two-case system in feminine nouns, in which are (KIEG!< *terrae*, dative and genitive) is opposed to ar (KIEG!< both *terra*, nominative, and *terram*, accusative).” and 51: “ Rumanian is a different kind of exception to the general development, since there feminine nouns preserved a distinction between a nominative–accusative and a genitive–dative inflection.”

⁴⁵ Herman 2000: 58: “On the other hand, as mentioned above, in some areas, in Africa and probably parts of Italy and Hispania, the nominative and the accusative came together earlier than in Gaul, so it is probable that the Romance spoken in these areas, at least in some declensions, ended up quite soon with just one inflection for each noun in the singular and another in the plural, which effectively means that in those regions there was no longer a system of inflections at all.”

Vulgar Latin Case-system	nominative	accusative-ablative	dative-genitive	Romance
<i>Gallia Narbonnensis</i> <u>Acc. ~ Abl. 53 %</u> Nom. ~ Acc. 0% Gen. ~ Dat 11 % <i>Venetia et Histria</i> <u>Acc. ~ Abl. 64%</u> Nom. ~ Acc. 0% Gen. ~ Dat 4 %				1. Gaul (Old French, Old Occitan)
<i>Dalmatia</i> <u>Gen. ~ Dat. 36%</u> <u>Acc. ~ Abl. 18%</u> Nom. ~ Acc. 1%				2. Balkans (Rumanian)
<i>Moesia Inferior</i> > ? <u>Acc ~ Abl. 38%</u> <u>Gen. ~ Dat. 18%</u> Nom. ~ Acc. 4%		<i>Moesia Superior</i> > ? <u>Acc ~ Abl. 60%</u> <u>Gen. ~ Dat. 28%</u> Nom. ~ Acc. 0%		

Table 2: Incorporating the examined provinces in the regions of the Vulgar Latin declension system

If we consider only the later periods of the provinces examined here, it becomes obvious that, Gallia Narbonnensis, with the predominance of the merged accusative-ablative (Acc. ~ Abl. 53%) case clearly distinct from the nominative (Nom. ~ Acc. 0%) and accompanied by a receding dative-genitive (Gen. ~ Dat. 11%), can be classified into the first area with the system of only two cases, typified by Old French and Old Occitan.⁴⁶ Similarly, Venetia et Histria, with the predominance of a merged accusative–ablative (Acc. ~ Abl. 64%) case clearly distinct from the nominative (Nom. ~ Acc. 0%) and accompanied by an evanescent dative–genitive (Gen. ~ Dat. 4%), can be classified into the first area, too.⁴⁷ Contrary to later Narbonnensis and Venetia et Histria, later Dalmatia, with the prevalence of dative–genitive inflection (Gen. ~ Dat. 36%) opposite to the well established accusative–ablative case (Acc. ~ Abl. 18%) and clearly distinct from the separate nominative (Nom. ~ Acc. 1%) simply displays the previous three case system of the later two case system of the Balkan-type with an opposition of a dative-genitive and a nominative–accusative inflection. Regarding Moesia Inferior and Superior, it can be asserted that a three-case system emerged in both areas. However, in contrast to later Dalmatia, a merged nominative–accusative case prevailed (MInf Acc ~ Abl. 38%, MSup 60%), while the existence of a merged dative–genitive case was also

⁴⁶ Parallely to this development, the confusion of genitive and dative receded significantly in later Narbonnensis (E 28 % > L 9%), thus a chance for establishing a merged dative-genitive case disappeared.

⁴⁷ The difference is that the confusion of the genitive and the dative is more isolated in Venetia et Histria (4%) than in Narbonnensis (9%).

perceptible (MInf Gen. ~ Dat. 18%, MSup 28%). Since here, unlike in Dalmatia and Narbonnensis, there is no remaining relevant inscriptional material from the 7th century, we cannot say in which direction the three case-system of this area would have developed: towards the Gallic or the Balkan-type.⁴⁸

Although these preliminary results may later be modified throughout the further processing of the Database, the achievements presented so far prove that the methodology established by József Herman is quite efficient, not only in the field of phonological, but also in the field of morphosyntactic investigations.⁴⁹

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⁴⁸ As far as I know, these results are new and barely have any antecedents in the literature; cf. the otherwise indispensable studies of P. A. Gaeng on the changes of nominal inflection as reflected in later (i.e. Christian) epigraphic sources of the Western provinces (Gaeng 1977) and of the Balkans (Gaeng 1984), and the fundamental Grammar of G. Galdi (2004) on the nominal inflection in the Latin inscriptions of the Eastern part of the Roman Empire (the Balkans and the Eastern Provinces, i.e. the territory concerned in CIL 3).

⁴⁹ Moreover, they also refute the statement made in Adams (2007: 7): "of the evidence that might be called on in investigating the regional diversity of Latin, inscriptions, with their uniformity right across the Empire, are the weakest."